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ABSTRACT

This collection of play sheets for parents and early intervention personnel was developed by the "Let's Play! Project," a 3-year federally supported project that worked to promote play in infants and toddlers with disabilities through the use of "low-tech" assistive technology. Each single page guide provides guidance to parents of young children with disabilities on one play-related topic. The play sheets are organized into creating play environments, special toys, and positioning for play. The topics covered by the play sheets are reading books with your child, using an overhead gym, keeping toys within reach, hand and finger play, bathtub play, Gertie (an inflatable "tacky" ball) games, selecting switch toys, switch toys (where to begin), standing up, sitting up, and using a "boppy" (a crescent shaped pillow to prop up an infant or small child). (DB)

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ED 447 663

Play Sheets

Let's Play! Project

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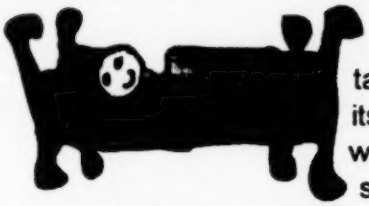
EC 308152

Creating Play Environments: Reading Books with Your Child

It's never too early to begin reading to your child. Research shows that children who are read to from birth learn to read sooner and more easily. Reading aloud is the best way to encourage children to read. Parents who don't read can make up stories about the pictures in a book- it is the language experience that the baby benefits from!

When- at bedtime?

Although bedtime is a "natural" time to read together, anytime, anywhere, anyplace is the rule! Making it part of a routine (naptime, bathtime, etc.) helps to ensure it happens everyday. Reading is a sharing time;



cuddle the child on your lap and talk about the book, its pictures and words. In addition to stories, read cards, cereal boxes or sing songs and repeat rhymes to your baby. When a child brings a book to you, make time to read it to her, even if you are busy.

Any special way to read?

Let your voice get soft and loud; go fast or sloowww. Use sound effects, change your voice for different characters, and associate sounds with pictures- whatever it takes to make the story come "alive"! The child may try to imitate you! It is the rhythm of the words that helps to develop a sense of language. If the text is too difficult for the child, make up words that go along with the pictures.

What stories should I pick?

Very young children enjoy simple picture and storybooks with photos or drawings of objects that are familiar. One picture and word on a page is best to hold the baby's attention. Sturdy books of cardboard or cloth invite use and are durable.

Try making "personalized" books by pasting pictures (either photos or from magazines) of familiar people, places and objects onto cardboard. Or use a photo album to protect from sticky fingers and drool. Point to the pictures as you tell stories about them. Encourage your child to point out certain pictures; then follow his lead! When the baby begins to talk, try repeating words together.

Older children may like the variety that lift-the-flap, touch-and-feel/sound books provide.

How can I help my young child to "read"?

- Try putting 2-3 books with their covers facing out where a young child can reach them.
- Choosing a favorite story keeps children involved. Remember, kids like repetition; see if your child anticipates what comes next.
- Young children may have a hard time turning pages. Try adding page "fluffers" in different positions to make this easier.

Creating Play Environments:
Using An Overhead Gym

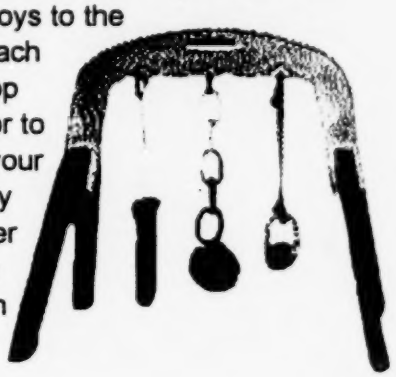
Frequently parents tell us that their infant is unable to play alone or that there are few toys available that he can use. Often the solution lies in how the toys are presented to a child and how easy they are for the child to play with. An **overhead gym** that is placed over the child is a versatile item which can be used in a variety of ways. Straight "out of the box" the gym has toys or other items hanging from the top bar.

Issues: The hanging items

- may be too high for your child to reach
- may be confusing with too many items
- may include uninteresting toy choices for the child

What you can do:

◆ Lower the toys. You may need to remove the toys that came on the gym; for some gyms, consider cutting the existing webbing just <u>below</u> the stitched line- this provides a loop. Plastic links that can be found in local toy stores are a great place to start to lower toys to the baby. Simply attach the links to the top bar of the gym (or to the loop). Hook your child's favorite toy to a link and lower it with other links until the child can reach it.



Remember... toys that are easier to reach are easier to play with! Try using shower curtain hooks as links. Other materials include elastic – a fun way to grab,pull a toy and let it go! Stringers (fancy non-tie shoe strings), traditional shoelaces, ribbons- anything you can tie something securely to- and raise and lower at will! Fabric stores provide strips of snaps for infant/ toddler pants- another great idea!

◆ Try hanging just one item (a favorite) from the center of the gym. Some children have a better sense of control when they are given one toy at a time. Try it on one side or another and watch the child play!

◆ Change the items as frequently as the child's interests indicate- if the child likes to make sounds, consider tying 2-3 metal canning rings together, measuring spoons or a sock with a bell inside. For visual items, look for mirrors, slinky or hang a Koosch ball. Dish scrubbies and sponges are items with different textures.

◆ Try putting the gym with a larger item suspended near the child's feet for kicking.

ENDOR LIST

Overhead Gyms: (local retailers)
Activity Links Gym (Fisher Price: $29.00)
Sight and Sounds Gym (Fisher Price: $35.00)
Activity Links Gym (Battat: $17.00)
Sesame St. Baby Play Gym (Tyco)

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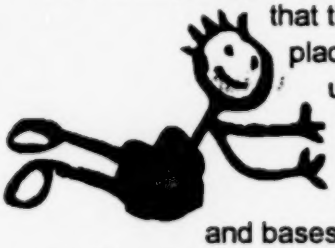
Creating Play Environments: Keeping Toys Within Reach

Making toys easier to reach and manipulate helps to extend the life of a toy and a child's interest. Many children find that as they move to get a toy they push it out of their reach. When they are unable to retrieve it, they quickly lose interest or become frustrated. There are things we can do to ensure playtime is fun for everyone!

Stabilizing the Toy

Toys can be secured to a floor table or other surface to make them easier to use. Using adhesive backed loop (female) on the table and hook (male) Velcro on the toy, ensures that the toy will stay in one place. This works particularly well with items such as busy boxes, in/out containers, sorters, pound toys, and bases for building- anything that needs to stay in one place!



◆ Showloop is a fabric which acts as loop velcro, but can cover a larger surface. It adheres with craft spray and creates an environment for a variety of small and larger toys to be placed on. Simply put a small piece of hook velcro on toys, household objects, or book covers to stick to the showloop surface.

◆ Carpet squares can be used in place of showloop for a slightly less secured surface

◆ Roly-poly toys need to move when they are batted. Try placing a piece of non-slip material or dycem under the toy. This will allow it to be used, but not to move out of the baby's reach.

Confining Toys

Another way to keep toys within touchable reach or seeable view is to use box tops, shoe boxes, or planter bases. Try putting a moving toy in a hula hoop; it's more fun to watch when it doesn't get away!

Attachers

Children playing on their backs often need toys lowered to reach them easier. Try using links, elastic, ribbon or shoelaces (stringers are fun!); make sure they are attached securely. Look in fabric stores for snaps on fabric tape (for toddler pants)- an easy way to hang items! They can also be used to attach toys or books to a tray for the child to retrieve.

Extending/Building Up Toys

Molding plasticine (found in craft stores) can be formed to fit over or replace too-small parts or handles. This is a great way to increase access. For crayons, markers, brushes and eating utensils, cylindrical foam can be slipped over the item to make it easier to hold.

VENDOR LIST

Velcro, Get a Grip - foam grips and Racy Laces:
Creative Educational Surplus
9801 James Circle
Bloomington, Minnesota 55431
Phone (612) 884-6427
Fax (612) 884-8336

Dycem, Foam grip:
Sammons
P.O. Box 386
Western Springs, IL 60558-0386
Phone (800) 323-5547
Fax (800) 547-4333

Fun Links:
Right Start
Right Start Plaza
5334 Sterling Center Dr.
West Lake Village, CA 91361-4627
Phone (800)548-8531

Show loop:
Lockfast, Inc.
10904 Deerfield Dr.,
P.O.Box 42488
Cincinnati, OH 45242
Phone (800) 543-7157

Stringers - Magic shoelaces:
Perfectly Safe
7245 Whipple Ave., NW
North Canton , OH 44720
Phone (800) 837-5437
Fax (216) 494-0265

Dycem:
Abilitations
One Sportime Way
Atlanta, GA 30340
Phone (800) 283-5700

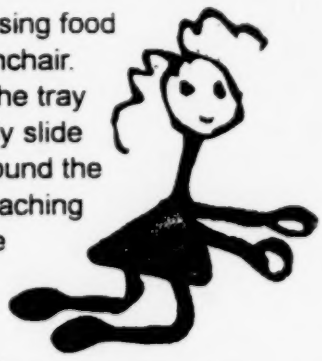
Non-slip material:
Commercially available by Rubbermaid

Creating Play Environments: Hand & Finger Play

Children use their hands and fingers to grab, poke, hold, bang and otherwise explore objects in their world. We often look for ways that provide practice to build up those small muscles to play in new and extended ways. Hands are used in all positions, sitting, standing or lying down. Increased exercise of muscles in the hands helps them to strengthen and to perform more refined movements. For young children, look for activities that include both edible and non-edible options. If s/he puts everything in his/her mouth, make sure the items are large enough not to choke on and are non-toxic.

Edible Play Options

◆ A good place for using food activities is in the highchair. Moving food around the tray helps children to freely slide hands and fingers around the tray, and promotes reaching and stretching. Some favorite "feeling" foods includes pudding, whipped cream, and yogurt. For kids who prefer more interesting or different textures, try oatmeal, rice or potatoes. For even more interest, try mixing items (cheerios in pudding). See if your child prefers warm or cold foods for squishing, patting or "finger-painting".



Non-edible Options

◆ Play dough is a classic option (an excellent recipe is found on this page); kids often like it warm- right from the stove! Add props such as pegs, dried noodles, cookie cutters and small rolling pins for added fun!

◆ Get a shoebox or box top and fill it with dried beans, rice and/or pasta; bird seed also offers a unique "feel". The sides will help to keep the pieces somewhat contained. Your child may enjoy using spoons, scoops and rakes with the materials. Try burying your child's hands or hiding small objects for your child to feel and to find.

Other Play "Environments"

Look for other materials that offer a new play environment.

◆ shiny pom-poms give children an opportunity to pull, grab, mouth, and shake the strings which result in new noise and movement.

◆ mylar balloons that have little air in them are easy to grasp, hold and bang for almost any child.

Many books and resources are available for hand and fingerplays that can be used at any age. A list of suggestions is found on the back.

Cooked Play Dough Recipe

1 cup flour
1/2 cup salt
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
1 cup water
1 Tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon food coloring

Combine flour, salt, and cram of tartar in a saucepan. Mix liquids and gradually sift them into the dry ingredients. When mixture is smooth, cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until ball forms. Remove from heat, cool slightly and knead until smooth. This is a very pliable and long-lasting dough

Fingerplay Resources: Website

◆ That Home Site!:
http://www.thathomesite.com/forums/load/parents/msg03220118737.html

◆ Move Over Mother Goose
http://www.bixler.com/gryphon/activity/10006033.htm

◆ National Network for Child Care (lots!)
http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/families/nncc/Curriculum/fingerplay.html

◆ Family Village Idea Box
http://www.worldvillage.com/ideabox/music.html#music

◆ Head Start of Lane County
http://www.headstart.lane.or.us/children/activities/music/songs-fingerplays.html

◆ Spanish Fingerplays
http://www.flint.lib.mi.us/fpl/pubs/ring/spanish.html

Fingerplay Resources: Books

◆ **Finger Frolics**
◆ **Finger Frolics 2**
◆ ***One Potato, Two Potato, Three Potato Four***
◆ ***Move Over Mother Mitt***
Authors: L. Cromwell and D. Hibner
Publisher: Partner Press

◆ ***2's Experience Fingerplays***
Authors: Liz and Dick Wilmes
Publisher: Building Blocks

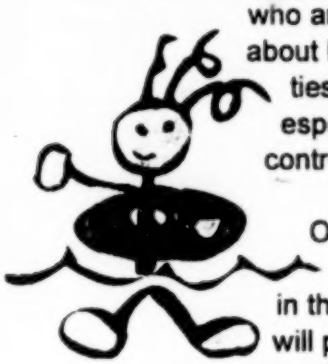
◆ ***Move Over Mother Goose***
Author: Ruth I. Dowell
Publisher: Gryphon House

◆ **Finger Plays for Nursery and Kindergarten.**
Author: Emilie Poulsson
Published by Dover Pubns

◆ **Games Babies Play: From Birth to Twelve Months**
Author: Vicki Lansky
Published by Book Peddlers

Creating Play Environments: Bathtub Play

Bath time is a wonderful time to play with your child. For children who already love the water it's a great opportunity to increase their experiences with movement, learning and imagination. For children who are not enthusiastic about bath time, play activities may diminish anxiety especially if they feel "in control" of the activities.



Of course it is essential that the child be safe in the water before s/he will play. There are a number of commercially available tub seats for young children. For older children who require supports, a bath-seat may need to be ordered from a specialty catalog.

Once a child is properly supported let the games begin!!!! Water is a wonderful sensory medium as it "responds" to virtually any movement. For the young child it may be fun to just splash by moving arms and legs in the water. The resistance of the water is a good way to increase muscle strength and the feedback your child will get is a "splash".

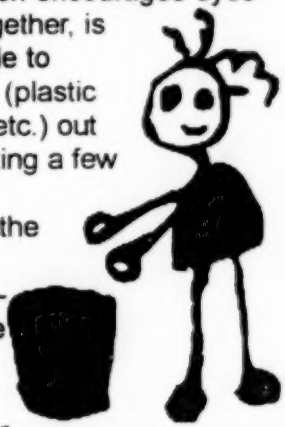
Games to Play/Materials to Use

◆ Naming Body Parts is a classic tub game. Use a wash cloth, a bar of soap, a paintbrush or foam soap to wash the body part your child has indicated. You can also put the child in charge of washing as you name the part to be washed -- this can be a fun turn-taking game. With a paintbrush your child can "paint" the tub and his/her body.

◆ Certain materials encourage water play: sponges for squeezing and wringing with two hands, cups to fill up and dump or two cups to pour water back and forth between them and "mix the water". Turkey basters are great for squeezing, and funnels are also interesting to pour water into and watch come out.

◆ Consider using empty dish liquid bottles or spray bottles to squirt water. Have an older child squirt the water into an empty margarine container floating on the tub surface to "sink the ship", or aim at his/her toes.

◆ Another game, which encourages eyes and hands to work together, is using a fish net or ladle to scoop floating objects (plastic fish, ping-pong balls, etc.) out of the water. Try putting a few ice cubes in the bath water. This will allow the child to experiment with different temperatures and to watch the ice cubes melt.



◆ Using foam soap or shaving cream at bath time can be fun. A child can use both hands to rub it on his/her body the sides of the tub and even up on the walls (surface dependent of course). Try making hand prints or drawing pictures in the shaving cream using a paintbrush or a finger.

- Tub blocks, available in most toy stores, are fun in the water. When wet, these toys stick to shiny tub and wall surfaces. A younger child can catch the blocks as they float in the tub or push them down into the water and watch them pop up! Or knock them down with his/her hand, a paintbrush, or a spray bottle. An older child may enjoy creating a picture.

- To promote creative play scenarios consider bringing small action figures and/or animals in the tub. By combining the people with the other tub toys a variety of imaginative play scenes can be created (i.e. people on a boat, in a swimming pool or in a flood). Bringing a waterproof doll into the tub and "washing the baby" is also an imaginary play favorite.

- Tub time is wonderful for amateur cooks. Consider bringing strainers, spoons, pots and empty spice containers into the tub for a fun cooking experience.

Note....

The experiences described above do not have to be limited to the tub. In nice weather many of these play activities can be done in a small wading pool. If you are really brave you can create an indoor beach: fill up a small pool in the house and put a shower curtain underneath it to protect the floor. Next to the water set-up a large cardboard box filled with dry beans or pasta for the "sand". Many of the water activities can also be done in the "sand".

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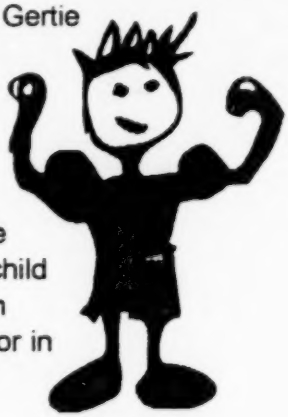
Special Toys: Gertie Games

What is a Gertie???

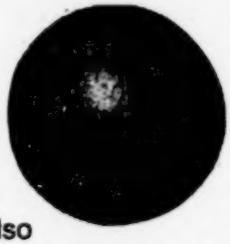
The Gertie ball is an inflatable ball that is brightly colored and invites touch due to its "tacky" surface. The Gertie can be inflated/deflated to any level desired with a straw. When it is left squishy it encourages grasping, when it is fully inflated is easier to roll, bounce etc.

How can you play with a Gertie????

◆ For a young child the Gertie is fun to grab, squeeze and pick-up with both hands. It is very light and easy to hold. It is also fun to watch the Gertie ball roll across the floor or table. A young child can play with a Gertie on his/her back, side, belly or in sitting. To heighten the sensory impact of the Gertie one suggestion is to put it in the refrigerator/freezer or run hot water over it before giving it to your child.



◆ The child who is a little older may enjoy beginning turn taking as the Gertie is rolled back and forth on the floor between the child and another person. Due to its lightweight the Gertie is slow moving and easy for a child to follow with his/her eyes and anticipate its movement. The Gertie can also be rolled into empty boxes or milk cartons to "crash them down!" Try new ball games by rolling the Gertie back and forth using different body parts (i.e. head, two feet, etc.)



◆ The Gertie is great for a child who is learning to play catch. It is slow moving and allows the child to prepare for its arrival. It also is so light that it does not hurt if you miss and get bonked in the nose. Parents, in addition it is a wonderful "house ball". It won't damage breakables when your child's aim is a little "off". Since this is the case why not play indoor kickball with the Gertie during the long winter months?

◆ The Gertie also floats in the bathtub or swimming pool. It is fun to try and push the Gertie under water and watch it pop back up.

* Caution * If your child likes to bite things you may need to watch your child closely with the Gertie. Children have been known to bite through a Gertie when it is held tightly with the teeth and pulled with both hands.

Where can you get your Gertie?

Gerties come in several ball shapes, sizes and colors and cost from $4 to $10. For the aspiring football star there is a Hurly-Gertie, a giant Gertie called the Ultra Gertie, Nobbie Gertie with bumps and one that glows in the dark.

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Gerties are available at specialty toy and learning centers.

On the World Wide Web:

Kids Planet: Toy Store:
http://www.cybout.com/html/toy_store.html
Someday Isle Quality Toys:
http://www.someaayisle.com/index.htm

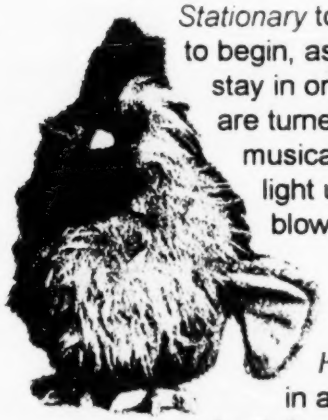
Catalogs:

Sportime: (800) 283-5700
Ball Dynamics: (800) 752-2255

Special Toys:
Selecting Switch Toys

Once a decision has been made to try a switch to play with toys, the next question is *what type of toy?* Use the same good criteria in selecting any toy for a particular child: will the child like the response of the toy when it is turned on? Is it something that will motivate her/him to interact with it? Consider also the movement of a toy and the visual motor skills required to interact effectively with it. A child must be able to control the movement of the toy to begin to use it in daily activities.

Categories



Stationary toys are a good place to begin, as they are active yet stay in one place. When they are turned on, they may make musical or other sounds, light up, vibrate or even blow bubbles!

Horizontal toys move in a single direction. Look for slow moving toys or those which move a short distance, then stop while a sound is made and then move again. The child can anticipate these actions- a sure sign of control! Turn the toy towards the child for more involvement; make 2 toys come together; send a snack on a toy's back to a friend; knock a tower over - the possibilities are endless!

Vertical toys move up and down; this changes the child's eye and head movement. Pictures can be placed on the sides of the ladder to incorporate language into play.

3-D or Circular toys require more visual tracking skills. Children enjoy watching the penguins climb up the stairs and slide down the curved track.

Bump and Go toys make up the largest category of switch toys. But they are the most difficult for children to anticipate and direct their random movements. By containing the toy within a specific area, a child is able to watch and better control the toy.

- Try using a shallow pan, hula hoop or box top to confine the toy.
- Placing puppets over switch toys gives them a whole new "look"!

SWITCH TOYS SELECTION

Stationary Toys	
Tape Recorder	Fisher Price, Sony, Playskool
Fan (Dog)	Enabling Devices
Drummer Bear	Kapable Kids
Dome Alone	Enabling Devices
Bubble Bear	Jesana Ltd.
Glitter Roll Music Box Switch	Enabling Devices
Horizontal Moving Toys	
Pony Pal	Jesana Ltd. A Very Special Catalog
Pudgy Piglet	Jesana Ltd. A Very Special Catalog
Barking Dog	Therapeutic Toys
Tuneyville Choo-Choo Train	Enabling Devices
Baby Brontosaurus	Enabling Devices
Three Dimensional Moving Toys	
Penguins Roller Coaster	Enabling Devices
Sesame Street Roller Coaster	Toys-R-Us
Circus Seals	Enabling Devices
Brave Bikers	Enabling Devices
Vertical Moving Toys	
Fireman Ladder Climber	Enabling Devices
Elefun	K-Mart
Randomly Moving Toys	
Musical Circus Truck	Enabling Devices
Stop-N-Go	Enabling Devices
Boom Boom Bunny	Enabling Devices
Fire Engine	Enabling Devices
Walking Robot	Enabling Devices

Special Toys:
Switch Toys: Where to Begin

What's a switch toy?

A battery-operated toy that has been adapted to be used with a single switch. Most battery-operated toys can be used to provide a way for a child to independently play. Switches can give a child control over starting and stopping a toy and provide a means to play in a group. To begin, you will need an adapted battery-operated toy and a switch.

Battery-operated toys

These can be found in most toy and novelty stores. Look for ones that use AA, C or D batteries and that appeal to the child. Does s/he like toys that are noisy or musical? Fast or slow? High or low contrast colors? For success by young children, look at the movement of the toy. Toys that make sound or action but stay in one place are best; or those which move slowly in a straight line. A child will want to anticipate and control the movement of the toy. Permanently adapted toys can be purchased through special catalogs or a battery adapter can be used with "off the shelf" toys.

Choosing a Switch

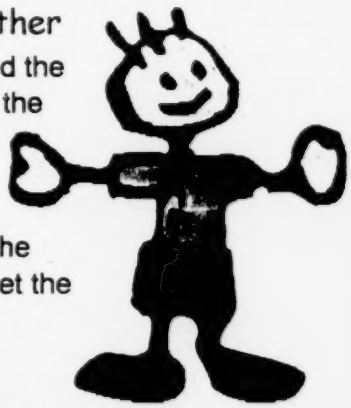
Switches come in all shapes and sizes. They are often used by a hand or arm, but can be used with any body part. A child should be able to voluntarily activate the switch with large or small movements. Our experience indicates that young children most frequently use a 2" to 5" push switch such as "Big Red" (avernit) pictured here.

Battery Adapter:

These are available through several vendors. Make sure the toy starts when it is turned on. Insert a battery adapter between 2 batteries or at the end of one.

Putting it all together

After you have inserted the battery adapter, close the battery door (you may need to use a file to make a space for the cord). Attach the switch to the toy and let the child play!



Switch Toy Hints

- secure the switch with velcro or a sturdy mount
- turn the toy towards the child- it will keep him/her more involved
- try adding props; knocking down blocks is always fun!
- use these toys as part of pretend play; a fire engine comes to the rescue!
- consider toys that can be used with small groups, such as Spin Art, Elefun or a Bubble Machine (Fisher-Price).

Resources: Switches and Switch Toys

Ablenet
1081 10th Avenue East
Minneapolis, MN 55414-1312
(800) 322-0956

Don Johnston, Inc.
P.O. Box 639
1000 N. Rand Road, Bldg. 115
Wauconda, IL 60084
(800) 999-4660

TASH, Inc. (Technical Aids & Systems for the Handicapped)
Unit 1-91 Station Street
Ajax, Ontario, Canada L1S3H2
(800) 463-5685

Enabling Devices
385 Warburton Avenue
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706
(800) 234-6006

HCT - Handicapped Children's Technological Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 7
Foster, RI 02825
(401) 861-3444

Jesana, Ltd.
P.O. Box 17
Irvington, NY 10533
(800) 443-4728

TFH (USA) Ltd.
4537 Gibsonia Rd.
Gibsonia, PA 15044
(412) 444-6400

Therapeutic Toys
P.O. Box 418
Moodus, CT 06469-0418
(800) 638-0676

Positioning for Play: Standing Up

Why is standing up to play important?

Most children enjoy standing as it places them in an upright position to explore and interact with objects and people in their environment at a different level. Standing assists in strengthening trunk and leg muscles and playing in the upright position encourages children to experiment with body movement. This is seen when children move along furniture to get toys, and "dance" by bending and straightening their knees.

Is my child ready to stand?

Children enjoy standing even before the muscles in their trunk and legs have enough control to support the body. Children with orthopedic and neuromuscular conditions may need an even greater amount of time to practice standing.

Here are a few things to consider prior to standing:

- The child should be able to hold his/her head in an upright position.
- The child's full foot make contact with the standing surface - so they are not standing on their tiptoes.
- The child should be able to straighten his/her legs while maintaining a slight bend in the knees.
- The keys to positioning any child are moderation and variety! Limit the amount of time the child spends in standing to 10 to 15 minutes at a time.

Options for standing supports:

Children with disabilities may require added supports to help them stand comfortably. The ideal standing position for play allows the child's arms and hands to be free for and does not require them to be used for support.

Walkers are now being used less often for supported standing/walking due to risk of injuries from falls. In response to this there are several products that assist a child to stand without the risk of falling. A few of these products include the Bouncing Entertainer (by GRECO), the Safe Stepper and wide based walkers. Below, we have provided greater detail on playing in one of our favorites, the Exersaucer.

Meet the Exersaucer:

- The Exersaucer has a rounded bottom and a sling seat which holds the child upright. It has legs that snap down to stabilize the base or which can be pushed up so the child can rock the saucer by shifting his/her body weight. The Exersaucer allows a child to experience movement by shifting weight or moving their legs without moving across the floor.

◆ The sling seat rotates so the child can spin in circles. The seat also locks into place for the child who is not as stable in standing. The seat height adjusts to three different settings to grow with your child.

◆ Each variety of Exersaucer comes with different toys affixed to the plastic tray that surrounds the seat. Some options include electronic toys that play music, toys to bat at and knobs to turn. We prefer the Exersaucers that have fewer toys and more room to attach a child's favorite toys.

◆ Some children may require additional support to stand upright in the Exersaucer. Place small pillows, stuffed animals and rolled towels in the front/back/sides of the Exersaucer to provide the child with more support.

Play Tips:

◆ Try using plastic links to attach toys to the Exersaucer tray. This way when the child throws the toy overboard it won't disappear and the child may even learn how to retrieve it!

◆ Sticky back Velcro can also be used to secure toys to the surface of the Exersaucer.

◆ The base of the Exersaucer (where the child places his/her feet) is convex. This may cause the child's feet to turn inward or make it more difficult to stand up. One solution is to place a square of carpeting with a firm back on the floor of the Exersaucer to level out the bottom. Try adding a piece of corrugated cardboard under the carpet for firmness.

◆ Fill the base of the Exersaucer with water, sand, Jell-O or cooked spaghetti! These are all great textures for a child to experience with bare feet.

Resources:

Exersaucer
Local toy store (toys 'R' Us) and department stores
Stepper
One Step Ahead
P.O. Box 517
Lake Bluff, IL 60044
(800) 274-8440

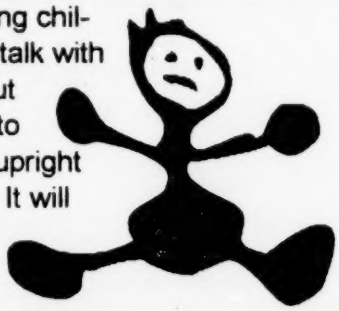
Wide Based Walkers
Kolcraft Room Rover (800) 453-7673
F. Mason Safe Surround 1800 Series (800) 242-1922

Walkers with friction strips
Graco Tot Wheels Entertainer 665GX Series (800) 345-4109
Safety 1st Mobile "4 Wheelin" Walker 45701 (800) 739-7233

Positioning for Play: Sitting Up

Why is sitting up to play important?

When a young child is upright s/he is able to see her surroundings better, interact with people better and use a wider variety of toys. Because this is such an important position for young children to play in, talk with a therapist about using supports to help a child sit upright by him/herself. It will provide a way for a child to play independently and for family members to interact face-to-face; something that's hard to do with a child on your lap!



Issues to think about:

- Consider a variety of options: you may need more than one seating solution
- Will the seating support need to move with the child? Can it be lifted and put in the car/bus?
- Children play most often on the floor!
- Consider using a floor table or tray to hold toys.

Household Options:

- Can a highchair be adapted for independent sitting?
- Plastic basins or laundry baskets can act as secure corner sitters as they come in a variety of sizes.

Commercial Options:

- Use a Boppy to give some support; belting 2 together will create a throne-like "chair".
- Look at booster chairs. These often come with hip belts and trays to help sit up and they can easily be used on the floor.
- Chairs that attach to the kitchen table keep a child close to the "action".
- Bath seats often secure as well on linoleum floors as on tubs!
- Consider a bed tray for a floor table; it may be a good front support and be just the right height for toys!

Specialized Options:

- Adjustable wooden chairs and tables are available through a variety of vendors if a child needs more support. Ask a therapist.

Adaptations: These can be used with all options. Non-slip material or wedges keep bottoms back in a chair; rolled towels, stuffed animals or swim noodles placed on either side helps a child stay "up".

Remember...

- If a child is working too hard to sit up s/he can't play...
- don't expect a child to sit for long in this new position- it's tiring at first!

Resources:

One Step Ahead Catalog
P.O. Box 517
Lake Bluff, IL 60044
(800) 274-8440

Sit-Tight, seat harness
Boppy (Camp Kazoo)

Right Start Catalog
Right Start Plaza
5334 Sterling Center Dr.
West Lake Village, CA 91361-4627
Phone (800)548-8531

Seat Supporter (surface with pommel)
Boppy (Camp Kazoo)
Splash Seat (Right Start)

Commercial Items:
Bean bag chair
Sassy Seat
Booster chairs
Tray, bench

Adaptation Materials:

Sitting

- towels rolled and secured with rubber bands to adjust positioning
- pillows to provide head or trunk control, lower extremity abduction
- car seat head positioner for head and trunk control
- stuffed animals for hip abduction
- bean bags, tires snow tubes for supported sitting or semi-reclined position
- non-slip material (Rubbermaid)
- belts: used as straps
- phone books turned back to appropriate depth/incline for wedge. Cover with contact paper

Tables

- large coffee cans to elevate toys off the floor
- cardboard boxes to use as a floor table or tray

Positioning for Play: Using A Boppy

What is a Boppy?

"Boppy" is a crescent shaped pillow invented for babies to prop them up in a variety of positions for play and observation. Boppys come in several sizes (regular, medium and itsy) and fabrics. Although the original vendor is Camp Kazoo, copies have been seen in local department and baby stores.

What can I do with it?

◆ Many families use the boppy to get the child on from lying flat on the floor to a *semi-reclined* position. In this way, the child's head and shoulders are supported and they can more easily see and reach for toys dangled in front of them. An overhead gym is frequently used to hang toys from. Try placing toys on the child's tummy- a good place to begin exploring with both hands!

◆ Boppys can also be used to help a child to *sit* independently (and safely). Young children often need just a little more support to sit up and play. Instead of using their hands to balance, the boppy can help to free up hands for play! Try stacking and belting 2 boppys together (2 regular or 1 regular and 1 medium) for even more support! They also travel easily to Grandma's!

→ A favorite place to play and read has always been on a parent's lap. Try using the boppy around the child's waist as a "table" by turning it around and placing books or toys on the fatter side. The medium boppy may be best for this.

◆ Some children may have difficulty holding their heads up when they play; try using the itsy boppy for head and neck support for short periods of time.

◆ We have also used the itsy for wrist support when using a switch for toy or computer play.

Where to get Boppys: Camp Kazoo

Buy in quantities and get a deal!
602 Park Point Dr., Ste.150
Golden, CO 80401
(303) 526-2626
http://www.boppy.com/
Local department or baby furniture stores.